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# THOUGHTS

ON THE

MIXED CHARACTER OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

IN

IRELAND,

WITH

PARTICULAR REFERENCE

TO THE

NEW SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

BY A PROTESTANT.

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EXTRACTED FROM THE BELFAST NEWS LETTER OF JUNE 18 AND 21, 1833.

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## THOUGHTS,

Sec.

THE Government of any nation must necessarily partake of the character, particularly of the religious character, of that nation. We do not expect to find a Christian Government in a Heathen country, nor a Heathen Government in a Christian country—a Roman Catholic Government in a Protestant country, nor a Protestant Government in a Roman Catholic country. This is more obviously true as it respects free countries, in which the governing power is constituted by a direct representation of the principles and feelings of the people: for as all classes naturally desire, for their own interest, to obtain as great a share in the making and executing of laws as possible, each class will, in exact proportion to its influence in society, obtain its share of representation in the legislative and executive departments of Government. If the people be Protestant, the Government will be so also; if the people be Roman Catholic, such will be the Government; if the people be of both denominations, so also will the Government; if there be infidelity and atheism among the people, infidelity



and atheism will certainly find their way to the seats of authority. This is a mere statement of fact, not the assertion of a right. It is the duty of every Government, as it is of every people, to be, in the highest sense of the word, Christian; still it is fact, that, in a free country, if the people be not Christian, so neither will the Government. We might as reasonably expect, by letting down a bucket into the sea, to bring up milk, as to find a religious Government emanating from an irreligious people. Precisely as is the people, so will the governors be. To say, therefore, that the legislature now is more favourable to Roman Catholics than it formerly was, is merely to say that Roman Catholics have now more influence in society than they formerly had. To say that there is atheism and infidelity among the rulers, is to say that such principles have been gaining ground among the people.

Sometimes attempts are made, by artificial means, to counteract this irresistible tendency existing in the different sections into which any community may be divided, to obtain influence in the government of the community proportioned to their influence in the community itself—as when one section, in an hour of victory and of insolence, seeks to secure to itself in perpetuity, by legislative enactment, the exclusive right of governing the whole. But such attempts are always pregnant with mischief. Their success can be but temporary, and even this temporary success is obtained at the expense of the corruption of the dominant party, and the oppression of the rest. The irresistible tendency of every party in the community to obtain its proper relative position, is like water



seeking its level. When one part is artificially depressed, and another elevated, there is a perpetual pressure against the force by which the natural equilibrium is destroyed, which sooner or later must overcome it.

The history of the world furnishes abundant examples of the operation of this principle. On the introduction of Christianity, no result probably was farther from the minds of its first promulgators than obtaining any share in the government of the Roman empire. The very utmost that they aspired to was toleration, or even permission to live in peace without any law for their security. Yet, when the Christian Body attained to sufficient strength and influence in the empire, it, as a natural consequence, seated itself on the throne of power. Such, precisely, was the effect of the Reformation. In every country in which the great mass of the people embraced the reformation, the reformers obtained possession of the government; no enactments, however strong, could secure to the members of the Church of Rome that authority which they conceived of right to belong to them.

But the history of Britain, and especially of Ireland, has been peculiarly prolific in such examples. When the Reformation first began to gain ground in Britain, the then dominant Church of Rome, which had interwoven itself with the civil institutions of the country, attempted to protect herself and the constitution, then essentially Roman Catholic, by the most violent means. But this violence only tended to strengthen the Protestant interest, till Protestants found themselves in a situation to make head against



their oppressors, and to assert their civil and religious liberties. A conflict ensued, and they succeeded in overturning the exclusively Roman Catholic constitution; but not content with obtaining their just share in the government of the country, nothing (as indeed was natural) would satisfy them short of taking the very position from which the Church of Rome had been driven, and establishing an exclusively Protestant constitution. For a time the members of the Church of Rome made no attempt to resist the now dominant party. They were in the same condition with respect to the body of the nation as that in which the reformers had been at the dawn of the Reformation. In Ireland they had been deprived of property, driven to mountains and morasses, and pursued by those vindictive and most oppressive enactments called the penal code, which placed the great mass of the nation in the situation (so hurtful to both parties) of a race of Helots. But persecution, as before, only tended to strengthen the persecuted party. The whole country languished under its baleful influence, and the legislature found that a relaxation was absolutely necessary to raise the kingdom from the degradation and misery into which it had been plunged. Every new relief that was granted gave a new impulse to the energies of the nation. It advanced rapidly in population, wealth, and intelligence. Roman Catholics, of course, shared in this general advancement; nay, they having been chiefly the victims of the unequal system, their advancement was the more conspicuous.

The consequence has been, that the relative influence of Roman Catholics in the community has been



rapidly increasing. Not that the Church of Rome, in Ireland, is becoming stronger *as a Church*; but merely that *members* of that Church, becoming more numerous, more intelligent, and more wealthy, are acquiring more weight and influence. This is a distinction of much importance, yet very little attended to. When members of the Church of Rome are advancing in those qualifications that necessarily give them influence in society, Protestants hastily infer that the Church of Rome, as such, is gaining strength in Ireland. Nothing can be more fallacious. It is quite possible that, during the very period in which the members of that Church are thus rising in influence, because they are advancing in wealth, and intelligence, and numbers, the Church of Rome may be losing a part of its excessive influence, and the worst peculiarities of its religious system dying away. How far, or in what respect, this is the state of the Church of Rome in Ireland, we shall not stop to inquire; all that we say at present is, that the strengthening of any church on the one hand, and the advancement of its members in importance and influence in the community, on the other, with all the outward appearances of prosperity as a religious body, growing upon them—the enlarging and beautifying of their places of worship—the making more liberal provision for their clergy—their religious ceremonies conducted with greater pomp, are processes so different, that the one may be advancing, while the other is retrograding—that the members of a church may be acquiring influence, while the church itself, in all its peculiarity of principle or practice, may be either melting away into infidelity,



or approximating to the other modes of religious belief that may be in its vicinity. Nay, it may, perhaps, be laid down as a universal truth, that the more near to equality the members of any church rise in political influence to the members of other churches, the more is that church in danger of losing its distinguishing features, and its very being as a separate Body.

Now, the necessary result of the advancement of Roman Catholics in the elements of political importance—namely, numbers, wealth, and intelligence, has been, their actual advancement in influence in the government of the country. Protestants are prone to imagine that the growing influence of Roman Catholics in the State arises from laxity of principle in the rulers—from the treachery, or imbecility, or liberalism of some party in parliament, or of some particular ministry. Nothing can be more unfounded. Their growing influence in the State flows directly from their growing influence in the nation. It was not the elective franchise, nor their admission to parliament, that gave them influence in the government; but their growing importance in the community first procured for them the elective franchise, and afterwards emancipation. Before either the one or the other was granted, they had, by their weight in the country, secured a party in the legislature, that procured for them first the one and then the other of these immunities. And the same progress will continue till they have found that level in the Government that exactly corresponds to the level to which they have attained in the community; unless it be interrupted by a civil war, kindled either by



Roman Catholics to hasten their advancement, or by Protestants to put a stop to it. And there are men on both sides who seem ready to plunge the nation into the horrors of such a struggle, with these respective ends in view. Should such a contest take place, (which may God avert!) the result either will be the destruction of all Protestant institutions, by the triumph of the Roman Catholic party; or the casting back of the country twenty, fifty, or a hundred years, (according to the completeness of triumph of the Protestant party,) and the commencement of a new process similar to that which has brought us to our present condition. To expect permanent peace while either party is exclusively dominant, is altogether chimerical; our only hope of tranquillity is to permit each party to find its way constitutionally to its proper level. Any man who advocates a civil war, or who countenances or excites a spirit that tends to such a calamity, is fighting against the unalterable arrangements of Providence; and is in principle, whatever he may be in name and reputation, a tyrant and a murderer.

But may not a dominant party retain its ascendancy, by watching the commencement of any attempt of the proscribed party to obtain a relaxation of its bondage, and by crushing the attempt before it can possibly succeed? Such a system has occasionally, it must be confessed, maintained its ground for a considerable time; and if any one would see the result of it, let him look at Turkey, at Italy, or at Spain: or let him look back to the state of Ireland during the reign of Queen Anne, when that precise system was in operation against Roman Catholics.



He will there see that the effect was to reduce Ireland to a condition more akin to that of the most enslaved province in the Turkish dominions, than to that of a nation enjoying a free constitution, and a Christian government. That island that now supports about 7,000,000 of inhabitants, and probably could support many more, then possessed only about 2,000,000, and these in abject poverty and wretchedness. The detestable system of government corrupted Protestants, so that the Parliament was stigmatized as, perhaps, the most corrupt court in Europe, while it sunk the mass of the people into the lowest moral and political debasement. Every institution supported by the State was administered with the most shameless profligacy, while a poor enslaved people did not dare to complain. Swift, who was no friend to the Church of Rome, compares Ireland in his time to a great hospital or workhouse, in which the officers were living in wealth and luxury, while the miserable inmates were destitute of food and clothing.

There is no medium, therefore, between permitting every section of any community to attain to that station and influence to which its relative importance entitles it, and adopting a system of rigorous and jealous oppression.

But there are some hardy spirits who assert that it is better even to adopt such a system, than to encounter any hazard of permitting Popery to become predominant. As this sentiment, or some approximation to it, is sometimes avowed, on the ground, not of political, but of religious principle, the appeal ought to be directly to the Sacred Scriptures; and before any Christian ventures to advocate a system



which must manifestly do injury to his neighbour, that good may come, he should be able to adduce the plain explicit authority of his Master. He should be able to shew that Christ warrants his followers to encroach upon the rights and liberties of their fellow-men, either for the protection of their own persons, or the advancement of his religion.

It is, however, quite unnecessary to argue the question of right. In a country in which the New Testament is known and revered, the question of right will always be superseded by the fact, that no such system can possibly be long persevered in. A system of ascendancy requires that the party supporting it be unanimous. Now, Protestants never *will* be unanimous in interfering with the rights and liberties of Roman Catholics. There may and will be some who are prepared to carry Protestant ascendancy to its utmost limits; but whether they may be right or wrong in principle, such is the aspect of the New Testament, that a large proportion of Protestants will, sooner or later, arrive at the conclusion, that to claim for themselves peculiar worldly advantages—immunities, and emoluments, or authority, on the ground of religious belief, is not to do to others as they would that others should do to them; and that it is a method of supporting and advancing religion altogether unknown to the spirit of the Christian religion. The ascendancy-party may complain of renegades and modern liberals; and imagine all the while that they are uncompromising advocates of true religion; but in vain. Nothing will make Protestants, with the Bible in their hands, long unanimous in supporting an ascendancy system.



Such a system may continue for ages in Turkey, because the religion of a Turk excites no feeling of compassion, much less of justice, in his bosom towards the victim of his oppression. Turks may be unanimous from generation to generation in their tyranny ; but no such unanimity can exist among Protestants ; and therefore no such system can long be persevered in. Roman Catholics obtained their liberties, not so much by their own efforts as by the want of unanimity among Protestants to withhold them—and that want of unanimity, flowing directly from the softening, humanizing, liberalizing influence of the Holy Scriptures.

The general proposition which these observations are intended to establish, as the ground-work of what is further to be advanced, is, that every religious Body, in any nation, must necessarily attain to influence in the government of that nation in exact proportion to the influence that it may attain to in society ; and that the only means of preventing a religious Body from increasing its influence in the government of the nation, is to prevent it from increasing its influence in society—that is, to prevent it from increasing its numbers, its wealth, and its intelligence. The reader, therefore, is earnestly requested carefully to examine the truth of this proposition, and to weigh the importance of it, and its general bearing upon the state of Ireland, before he proceed to the following inferences from it.

We proceed further to observe, that whatever is the character of any government, such also must be the character of every institution emanating from



government, and supported by the public funds. If the government be Roman Catholic, such will be all government institutions; if the government be exclusively Protestant, its institutions will follow the general rule, and be exclusively Protestant also; if the government be of a mixed character; a similar mixture will be found in every thing that flows from it. The magistracy, the judges, the grand juries, the police, the army, the navy, must all partake of the character of that legislative Body from which they emanate. And so it must be with regard to every system of education originating with the government, or supported by government funds. To expect that a mixed body, such as the British legislature, should establish a system of education, either exclusively Roman Catholic, or exclusively Protestant, is altogether as chimerical, as to expect that a mixed people should choose their legislative body exclusively of one party. The reason of this is obvious; for every party, religious or irreligious, in the legislature, will endeavour to imbue all institutions over which the legislature has authority, with its own principles; and every member having power, to the extent of his own vote, and his means of influencing the votes of others, the result, in a mixed legislature, must necessarily be mixed institutions.

The history of Government institutions in Ireland furnishes abundant proofs of the truth of this observation. Before the Reformation, all Government institutions were of course exclusively Roman Catholic. After the Reformation, and the struggle that ensued for ascendancy, the Protestant party having prevailed, all Government institutions became as



exclusively Protestant. Their corporations, their schools, their officers of law, nay, even their army and police, became rigidly and exclusively Protestant. As Roman Catholics have risen to influence in society, Government institutions have assumed less and less of an exclusive character. In the army and navy all forms of religion are treated alike, or nearly so. The administration of the law, in regard to judges, jurors, police, &c., have been assuming more and more of a mixed character. Education has been undergoing the same change. Half a century ago, no religious body separate from the Established Church could have received Government aid or countenance. The Association for Discountenancing Vice, which was originally a voluntary society, formed conjointly of members of the Establishment and Protestants of other denominations, no sooner was taken under the wing of the State, and supported by public funds, than its doors were shut against Dissenters, and fell exclusively under the management of the Establishment. The Kildare-place Society was, we believe, the first institution which admitted persons of different denominations into its committee of management, that obtained support from the legislature. The consequence was, that this society, till of late, was discountenanced by all, or nearly all the Prelates of the Establishment, and by the great body of the inferior clergy.

The obloquy which the present Government system of education has to encounter from Protestants chiefly of the Established Churches of the empire, and these chiefly the clergy, is to be mainly attributed to its being a sensible step in the progress of



Government institutions towards the mixed character of the Government itself. The chief point of difference between the present Board and the Kildare-place Committee is, that the parties are more equally balanced. The Kildare-place Society admitted Roman Catholics upon their Committee, but in so small a proportion that they had no effective influence. In the present Board, Roman Catholics are admitted to a share of influence, even in the primary arrangements, proportioned to that which they hold in the community, and in the Legislature. Some Protestants complain of the motley character of the Board. It is, and necessarily must be, a mere image of that legislative body from which it emanates. It consists of five Protestants—three of them of the Establishment, (one of these being its President,) and two Roman Catholics. It would be difficult to construct a Committee consisting of seven members, so as to render it a more perfect image in miniature of the present state of the British Legislature. The Board, therefore, in its constitution, has more exactly obeyed that law which renders every Government institution an image of the Government itself; even as the Government is, by a similar law, but an image of the people from whom it emanates.

Are Protestants then, it is asked, tamely to stand by and see their institutions gradually broken down, or losing their Protestant character? By no means. They are bound to defend, to the utmost of their power, those institutions which are calculated to uphold and disseminate their principles. But how is this defence to be conducted? Not surely by opposing the legislature, because it bears the impress



of the people from whom it emanates ; or by opposing Government institutions, because they participate in the character of the legislature that gives them birth. To contend against these laws is to contend against the abstract principles of right and justice, and against the arrangements of Divine providence. In defending their institutions, Protestants must proceed in subserviency to these universal, unalterable laws. The only possible method of influencing Government institutions is to influence the character of Government itself ; and the only possible method of influencing the character of Government is to influence the character of the people. It is among the people, then, that the defence is to be conducted. If Protestants would have all Government institutions to retain a Protestant character, they must seek to maintain and advance Protestant influence in society. They must endeavour to extend the influence of Protestant feeling, by commending their principles to the adoption of their opponents,—to persuade them, if possible, to become Protestants ; or, if this may not be, to convince them of the superiority of institutions conducted upon Protestant principles. If they fail in thus persuading the people, it is utterly in vain to contend with the Government. And it is well that Protestants should have before their eyes fully and distinctly this truth, that just in proportion to the advancement of Roman Catholics in influence,—that is, in numbers, in property, and intelligence, Protestant institutions are brought into danger. Should the country ever become generally opposed to Protestantism, no legislative enactments, no guards or fences of the present



constitution, will preserve Protestant institutions from change or from destruction.

There are several practical lessons suggested by these observations :—

The first is, that no party in the community should be displeased at the increasing influence of any other party in the Government or Government institutions. For as all parties are alike anxious and diligent to obtain such influence, it may be taken for granted, that, unless an appeal has been made to force, the increasing influence of any party is fairly gained ; that it is the result of zeal, and industry, and intelligence. Influence in the legislature is (in a free country) a mere index of influence in society. To be angry with it, is as childish as to be angry with a clock for striking an unwelcome hour, or with a barometer for indicating the approach of foul weather. When influence is obtained in the legislature, the battle is won, and fairly won, and all hostility on that ground should cease. If Protestants, instead of grudging and being discontented with the growing influence of Roman Catholics in the State, were to welcome them to the position which they have attained, with open hearts and hands, they would at once render that increasing influence less prejudicial to their own institutions, and render Roman Catholics less eager and active in the pursuit of it. But the discontent and anger which a large proportion of Protestants have manifested on every advancement of Roman Catholic influence, has given tenfold zeal to every triumph ;



and has added, to the natural desire of all men for power, the still more stimulating desire of breaking the power of an oppressor, and mortifying an implacable enemy.

This frankness and goodwill towards Roman Catholics, on every accession of power that they obtain, is not inconsistent with regret on account of their growing influence, or even with most energetic endeavours to retard it. Such dispositions are merely a cheerful acquiescence in the operation of an irresistible law. The horrors of warfare itself are mitigated when the vanquished can cheerfully welcome the conqueror to the legitimate advantages of his victory. But, unquestionably, every conscientious Protestant must deeply lament the growth of an influence which he conceives to be adverse to the truth, and injurious to the moral character and future hopes of his fellow-men. And his regret will be felt as much, and more, on account of Roman Catholics themselves, as on account of Protestants. He will grieve to see men achieving victories over their own liberties; and, under the influence of sad mistake, assisting to break down institutions from which they might have derived the most valuable of all acquisitions—moral and spiritual culture. And every new development of so lamentable a progress will impress him with a sense of the necessity of renewed exertions to set his fellow-countrymen right, to convince them that they are turning their increasing influence to their own injury, and to persuade them to uphold such a character in the national institutions as shall render these subservient to their own real advantage, and to the homage that is due



to the Great God, by extending the knowledge and asserting the authority of his law. This is the second practical lesson that we would have Protestants to deduce from the principles which we have been inculcating. Let every new indication of the advancing influence of Roman Catholics in the community bring Protestants to a sense of their reckless neglect of a people placed within their reach, and peculiarly committed to their care ; and let it arouse them to a sense of duty towards that people, and send them forth under the influence of the meek, affectionate spirit of Christianity, not to proselyte them to their party, but to promote to their utmost power their temporal and spiritual interests, to elevate them in the scale of intelligence, to gain their confidence and regard, that they may employ their influence to lead them to such measures as may be most conducive to their best interests.

Nor is there any intention to insinuate that Protestants ought not, by means of their own legitimate influence in the State, to seek to preserve, as much as possible, the Protestant character of public institutions. In the present imperfect state of society, the balance of parties in the constitution is to be preserved, as the balance of motion is preserved in the solar system, by each party drawing every thing towards itself with a force proportioned to its weight. It is to be expected that Roman Catholics will employ their constitutional influence in assimilating public institutions to their principles ; and Protestants ought not to be less vigorous in contending for their own, provided they contend lawfully. So long as the contest is carried on by mere votes, either on



the hustings or in Parliament, neither party is to be blamed; for it is upon the compact—that the minority submit to the majority—that society in this free country is held together. But that party, whichever it may be, which shall interrupt this constitutional contest by the introduction of violence, will stamp on itself the character of murder, and will become responsible for all the consequences.

The attitude assumed, and the violent language held by some of the opponents of the Government system of education—the undisguised, or ill disguised wish that Protestants could be induced, as in the days of their forefathers, to preserve their institutions by force of arms, are as inconsistent with the principles of a free constitution, as with the spirit and precepts of Christianity. When Protestants shall, by the use of legitimate means, persuade Roman Catholics of the duty and the advantage of introducing the whole Bible into schools, and rejecting the Apocryphal Books, then, the people being united on that subject, the Government will be united also: but till this be effected, it is vain to expect that the Government will be disposed to insist on that measure; and if the Government did insist upon it, equally in vain would it be to expect success in it. Such a system of education would merely, by throwing the funds for the support of it into the hands of Protestants, create distrust and hostility in the Roman Catholics, both clergy and influential laity. The necessary consequences would be, in the first place, that the resources of the country, instead of reaching the great mass of the population, would be expended in educating Protestant children, along with some small



proportion of Roman Catholic children whom Protestants might be able to induce to attend schools conducted by them ; and, in the next place, that the system, so far from promoting the reconciliation of the two parties, and the peace of the country, would become a perpetual source of irritation and discontent.

Such precisely seems to have been the history of the Kildare-place Society. The plan of it was formed without consultation held with any Roman Catholics in whom the people had confidence. Protestants concocted a system which they conceived Roman Catholics ought to accept of. Whether the influential clergy or laity of that Church would have concurred in the plan, had they been consulted, is not for us to conjecture ; but the rejection of their counsel in the formation of the plan, was felt as a sufficient indication of an intention to take the education of Roman Catholic children out of their hands. The necessary result was the excitement of jealousy and hostility ; and, by the growing influence of Roman Catholics in the country, and consequently in the State, they have procured the abandonment of that Society by the Government. The present system has been formed by the Government itself ; and consequently represents the feelings of those parties in the country from which the Government emanated. Particularly, it has been formed by a joint consultation of Protestants and Roman Catholics ; and the conducting of it being entrusted to a Board consisting of both parties, it seems more likely to give general satisfaction than any former system. That many will oppose it is to be expected. Those Protestants who have been habituated to ideas of



ascendency, supported by military force, and who have been accustomed to superintend the disbursement of all public monies, will be displeased to see Roman Catholics admitted to a share of such influence ; and the more violent and sanguine of the Roman Catholic party may expect a more decided recognition of their religion. Still, on general principles, a system formed by the united counsel of both parties must be more likely to give satisfaction than any system formed by any one of the parties.

But Protestants complain that the Roman Catholic people would willingly draw nearer to them in the admission of the Bible, if the priests would permit them ; and that the present system is a concession to the priests. But there is very obvious fallacy in this mode of reasoning. It is evident that the priests will have influence with the Government in proportion to their influence with the people. If they can influence the people, their voice must be heard in the counsels of Government. Again, if the people, in point of fact, will not send their children to schools in which the Protestant version of the Bible is read, it seems to be matter of little moment, so far at least as this question is concerned, whether they act from their own direct conviction, that it would be wrong to do so, or whether they act under the direction of the priest, and their own conviction that they are bound to yield obedience to the priest in that matter. If indeed Protestants, by discountenancing the priest's authority, could emancipate the people from it, they might have some reason for using their influence for that purpose : but, unhappily, such has been the nature of the intercourse of



Protestants and Roman Catholics on such subjects, that the more Protestants discountenance the priests, the more influence do the priests acquire ; and the more violently Protestants revile the priests, the more profoundly do Roman Catholics revere them. It seems to be a hard lesson to learn that the only way of inducing the people to read the Bible, either with the concurrence of the priest or without it, is to introduce such light on the subject among them, as will either bring both priest and people to see the duty and the privilege of reading the Scripture, or will show the people that they ought to read the Scripture whether the priest concur or not. To attempt to induce them to read the Scripture by law, or by holding out the promise of education, or any other boon, while their understandings are not sufficiently enlightened on the subject, is merely an attempt to bribe them to do violence to their consciences.

But there is another element which necessarily enters into every inquiry into the treatment of Roman Catholics generally, and particularly of their clergy.

It is not to be forgotten that Protestants have employed most unhallowed and most unscriptural means to detach Roman Catholics from their church. Instead of being instructed in the doctrines of the Reformation, they were commanded to adopt the reformed religion on penalty of being driven from their places of worship. Then came a protracted warfare in defence of their church, thus assailed, not by Christian weapons, but by legislative enactments, and by force. This ended in the treaty of Limerick,



in which all that they stipulated for was toleration. No sooner were Protestants seated in power than they refused toleration. The infamous penal code was enacted and put into rigorous operation, their clergy were proscribed, their children put into the hands of Protestants to be educated, their property confiscated, and every injury and insult heaped on them that a vindictive policy could invent. And not only were they assailed with violence, but with every species of allurements. The children of wealthy Roman Catholics were tempted to become Protestants by the promise of being put in possession of the property of their own parents. Attempts were made to bribe the poorer class to give up their children, by offering to provide for them and educate them in charter schools; and to all classes of them an open way to all places of emolument and power was held out as the reward of apostasy.

It is not intended to charge the guilt of these proceedings on the Protestants of the present day; nor even the whole guilt that would be contracted by the perpetration of them in a time of greater light and freedom of thought, upon the Protestants of that day. Many who were parties to the enactment of these laws acted honestly, but in error, imagining that they were doing God service. But Protestants are not to expect that allowances will be made by Roman Catholics to the same extent to which they may be disposed to carry them. Roman Catholics cannot but view the whole system as an odious system of persecution and treachery.

When Protestants are reminded of these facts, they affect to treat them as old stories that ought



to be forgotten. They do not consider that these stories are not nearly so old as the persecutions in the reign of Queen Mary, or the massacre of Paris, or the great rebellion under Charles I., events which are fresh in their recollection, and which are continually brought forward to impress the public with the danger of granting the common rights of citizenship to Roman Catholics and Dissenters.

Besides, Roman Catholics have never for an hour been permitted to forget the penal code. It has never been publicly disavowed and repented of by the Protestant Churches; it has been but gradually removed, and every new encroachment upon it obtained in the face of violent opposition from a party always representing themselves as the only Protestant party. The last important blow was given to it in the passing of the Emancipation Bill: but a large proportion of the Protestants of Ireland manifested a spirit which, whether justly or not, convinced the Roman Catholics that want of power alone, and not change of principle, or want of inclination, prevented them from reviving the whole provisions of the penal code. Protestants have complained that the Emancipation Bill has not tranquillized the country, nor reconciled contending parties. How could it, when Protestants received that measure so ungraciously, when they refuse to be reconciled, and when they have never for a moment ceased to display their ensigns of defiance and hostility?

The effect of these measures has been to bring the minds of Roman Catholics into nearly the same posture with respect to Protestants and a Protestant



legislature, with that of the Presbyterians of Scotland with respect to Roman Catholics and Episcopalians generally. So many attempts were made, some of a more insinuating, others of a more violent description, to obtain the acquiescence of Presbyterians in a Roman Catholic, and afterwards to a Protestant Episcopacy, that they repelled every attempt of the Government of that day to interfere with their religion, and would listen to no communication with Government but through their clergy. If Mary, or James, or Charles the First or the Second, wished to draw the Presbyterians of Scotland into any measure, the people constantly presented their clergy to judge for them in the first instance. It was in vain that the sovereigns of those days complained of the disaffection of the Presbyterian ministers, and of their influence with the people. They were regarded by the people as their protectors from the insidious arts of the Roman or Episcopal establishment; and they would listen to nothing till their clergy were satisfied.

Now, similar causes have produced similar effects in the Roman Catholics of Ireland. So many attempts have been made to force or to bribe them to become Protestants, that they view with distrust every overture of a Protestant Government to interfere with their religion. With the same feelings, excited by a similar treatment, they depend on their clergy to protect them from all sinister influence. Their constant reply, in effect, is, Satisfy our clergy and we shall be satisfied; but without this we cannot listen to you.

It is an error, therefore, to view the clergy as the



chief obstacle to the success of purely Protestant measures for the instruction of the Roman Catholics of Ireland. The obstruction to such plans lies much deeper than in the mere influence of the priests—it lies in the feelings of the people, who have not confidence in the motives of Protestants in proposing to educate them. The priests have, doubtless, great influence ; but much of it has been thrown into their hands by the unjust and most injudicious treatment to which they and their people have been subjected. Nothing is more obvious than that, in present circumstances, the clergy and people must be dealt with together as forming one closely compacted body. If it were desirable or practicable to separate them, the Protestants of Ireland have totally disqualified themselves for effecting that object.

The present system of education, therefore, wisely relinquishes the project of separating the priests from the people ; and, taking them together, seeks to cultivate them, and to bring them into more friendly communication with Protestants, and with Government.

But some zealous Protestants affirm that it is unlawful to consult with Roman Catholics on such a question as the education of youth ; and that the Protestant members of the Board are temporizing and betraying the interests of religion, by admitting persons holding errors so fatal as the Roman Catholics do into such deliberations. This is another important question of Christian ethics which deserves attention, and it is a question that equally affects conscientious persons of all denominations. Without



spending time in treating it generally and abstractly, let us at once view it in its connexion with the actual state of Ireland, and particularly with reference to the duty of Protestants.

On the one hand, a conscientious Protestant, by entering Parliament, must lay his account with admitting a large share of what he necessarily regards as sinister and unscriptural influence into deliberations on the most solemn and important subjects. For the duty of Parliament passes far beyond the bounds of mere civil arrangements. It takes direct cognizance of spiritual subjects—of the support of the ministers of religion—of the principles to be held and inculcated by them—of the religious instruction of youth, and other topics of a similar nature. It is vain to say that Parliament has not the *right*, and *ought* not to have the power to do this. The supreme legislative body cannot but have the power, and cannot but have a *legal* right to exercise the power; and this right is recognized, at least, by every one who consents to sit in Parliament. A conscientious Protestant, therefore, who enters Parliament, does so with the previous knowledge that he is to sit down at the same council-table with Roman Catholics; with Protestants whose sentiments are as much opposed to his as those of Roman Catholics; nay, perhaps, with sceptics or atheists; and he must concede to all of these the full weight in such deliberations of their talents and their votes. It is true he may protest against measures which he disapproves of; still, by sitting in Parliament, he accedes to the compact of conceding to every member, whatever may be his



principles, the full weight of his influence in such questions as have been alluded to.

A similar concession must be made if he become a member of any institution emanating from the legislature. The first of these is the ministry, called emphatically the Government. The ministry being formed by the balance of parties in the legislature, must reflect the character of the legislature. A conscientious man, therefore, who becomes a member of his Majesty's more immediate council, must lay his account with governing the nation under the influence of the mixed principles of a council so constituted. If he take part in the command of the army, he must bend to the same mixed influence, and lay his account with providing alike for the religious worship of all the soldiers under him. If he become a magistrate, he must administer oaths (which is an act of divine worship) in the Roman Catholic form. If he be a grand juror, he must provide for chaplains of all denominations, and see that each have access to prisoners of his own denomination. If he take part in the management of a work-house or an hospital under Government, he must submit to the same apparent compromise. In short, it is impossible for a person of any religious denomination to have any thing to do with Government or Government institutions in Ireland, without being so far involved in the sanction of what he regards as dangerous error.

Is it then the duty of every conscientious man to decline taking part in the administration of Government, or of Government institutions? The immediate effect of the general adoption of the affirmative of



this question, would be to leave the whole affairs of State, and of national institutions in the hands of unprincipled men; under whose direction, an influence hostile to religion would be made continually to emanate from the sources of law and authority, over the face of the country. This consequence is so obvious, and so frightful, that, by common consent, persons of the most strict and unbending religious principles adopt the negative side of the question, and determine it to be their duty to take share in the administration of Government, and of Government institutions, as they have opportunity; and we see Protestants of the most scrupulous religious character consenting to sit round the same table, not only with Roman Catholics, but with infidels, with men of immoral lives—deliberating along with them, not merely on matters of civil government and finance, but on most important questions of religion and morals.

On what terms, then, may persons of opposite religious opinions co-operate in the administration of Government, or of Government institutions? I know but of one alternative on this point: namely, either by common consent to banish all questions involving religious principles, or, by the same common consent, to admit so much of religion as they hold in common. Let us look at this alternative in connexion with a system of education.

On the one hand, a system of education might have been constructed which, for the purpose of avoiding all religious compromise, would have banished religion, and confined itself to the furnishing to the scholars the means of obtaining



information, by teaching them to read, or, perhaps, adding some portion of information on secular subjects ; leaving religious instruction entirely to the parents of the children, and those religious instructors whom they might choose to employ. Such a system would have avoided any direct compromise of principle, and, if nothing better could be introduced, it would, we conceive, have violated no religious duty to introduce such a system. But it would have been exceedingly defective, and would have forfeited many advantages which the other side of the alternative, if practicable, would secure.

On the other hand, then, a system of education has been formed upon the principle of introducing as much of religion as all parties concerned can agree upon. This, also, will necessarily appear to persons of every religious denomination to be defective ; because each will find excluded something of what he regards as necessary to a complete religious education. It is, however, by no means so defective as a system founded upon the opposite side of the alternative would have been. As all professing Christian denominations receive, in common, a large portion of revealed truth, and that portion of truth, elementary, precisely that which persons of all denominations would first communicate to their children, and without which the peculiarities of the different denominations could not be understood—the system of introducing as much of religion as all can agree upon, secures to all the children a considerable portion of religious instruction, which all parties acknowledge to be necessary. Children



under this system, in the present condition of the kingdom at least, cannot be educated Atheists or Deists; they cannot be left in ignorance of the being and attributes of God, his power, his justice, his holiness, his mercy, or of the law of God—or of their own guilt, or of their moral responsibility, or of the future state and the coming day of retribution,—or of the advent of the Son of God to save sinners by his life, of his death, and resurrection from the dead, or of the punishment of the wicked and salvation of the righteous, or of the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ, of repentance and new obedience. And when children have been instructed in these truths, they are surely in a better state of preparation for receiving what conscientious persons conceive to be further necessary, than if they were reared in ignorance of them. When this principle is applied to the teaching of the Scriptures, the advantage is immense. All parties, who are capable of influencing the Government of the country to any extent, agree in receiving the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the word of God, with very little variation of translation. Even in those variations which appear in the Roman Catholic versions, they understand the words used in them nearly in the same sense with that which is conveyed by Protestant translations, and, therefore, find no difficulty in substituting the Protestant translation for their own. Their peculiarity consists chiefly in acknowledging books as Scripture which Protestants reject; but these are necessarily excluded by the very terms of the agreement, and all that Roman Catholics stipulate for upon this head is, that what-



ever of Scripture may be issued, shall not be issued as the whole word of God, but merely as an extract from it.

Doubtless it would be desirable if the children could be explicitly informed in what the whole word of God consists, and could be thoroughly instructed in it as a complete code of revelation; but that is impracticable under the auspices of a Government which, emanating from a people divided upon that point, are themselves also divided. Even the Kildare-place Society were under the necessity of admitting the New Testament in place of the whole Scriptures, and of withholding religious instruction from the Bible. That Society did not dare to include information in *what* the whole word of God consisted; or to give to their pupils instruction in the word of God as a complete code of revelation. They merely taught extracts selected at the discretion of the teachers or conductors of the schools; and although it was rendered necessary that at least the whole New Testament should be in the schools, they could not announce to the children that the New Testament, nor even the Bible, as received by Protestants, contained the whole of the revealed will of God.

But admitting that the system of education adopted by the Kildare-place Society was more complete than the present Government system, what was the result? It was too complete to be practicable. It was defective in this one point, that it was not formed upon the system of introducing only what all parties could concur in. It introduced what was



obnoxious to one of the parties concerned, and therefore failed, so far as the interests of that party were to be consulted.

But it is urged that Government ought to go straight-forward with their duty, unmindful of the consequences—that there should be no compromise with error. All this is very true; but the question still returns, Can or will a Government, emanating from a divided people, and itself consequently divided, pursue what any one of the component parties of it regards as the straight-forward course of duty? Before this is to be expected, the people must be persuaded to coincide in sentiment with the uncompromising party. Till this be effected, all declamation on the point of duty is idle; for the people will choose representatives of their own sentiments, and these representatives will influence by their votes the Government measure; so that the result can never be of that unmixed character that is pleaded for.

What do these members of Parliament gain, who carry the uncompromising system to its utmost limit? They commence by entering into the compact of yielding to every man, whatever may be his sentiments, the weight of his vote on the question. They then declare for no compromise; and pursue a strain of debate which renders the opposite party more disposed, than they perhaps otherwise would be, determinedly to oppose what is set forth as the only Scriptural system of education; and the result necessarily is akin to the composition of forces in mechanics—the motion is in neither of



the directions contended for, but in an intermediate direction—the diagonal of the contending forces. The latest result of these debates has been the Government system of education. The result would have been precisely the same if the contest had been avoided, and each party had agreed to yield what the others could not conscientiously admit. On this principle the Board was constituted. It consists of persons drawn from different religious denominations, each being expected, of course, to protect his own principles from violation. The Board, however, looking forward to the inevitable result of a contest, have avoided it by anticipating it; and the result has triumphantly proved the wisdom of that conciliating measure. When the problem brought before them was, How far can we proceed together in communicating religious knowledge? Roman Catholics were found to make concessions which the most sanguine Protestants could not have expected.

But, say the objectors, if the Roman Catholics be satisfied with this system, Protestants are not, and will not avail themselves of it; so that the system will fail on their side. This unquestionably would, to a great extent, frustrate the object of it; which is not merely to instruct, but to reconcile and unite the people. There are, however, two grounds of hope and encouragement. In the first place, Protestants are not so dependent for education on Government aid as Roman Catholics; and even if they should refuse to avail themselves of the Government system, they have, or ought to have, from the abundant public funds in the hands of Protestants,



means of receiving education independent of the Board. But, in the second place, although a considerable proportion of Protestants in Ireland have, under the influence of clamour and misrepresentation, such as perhaps never was before introduced into any similar question—(such as the cause of truth and justice never can need, and seldom receive,)—been prejudiced against it; yet when the Protestant members of the Board, a Protestant administration, and thousands of the most religious and intelligent Protestants in every part of the United Kingdom, approve of the system, it may confidently be expected that prejudices against it will soften, and that many who now look upon it with distrust, will, by and by, view it in a different light. It is scarcely to be feared that any considerable proportion of Protestants will long retain the uncharitable, ungenerous suspicion, that five Protestants, in respectable stations, three of them belonging to the Christian ministry, against whom no charge of delinquency previously existed, could deliberately and gratuitously, without conceivable end or object, abandon their own principles for the sake of pleasing or propitiating Roman Catholics. Even if Protestants were disposed to retain a suspicion so harsh, the fact, that nearly the whole lay Protestant population of England and Scotland, with almost the whole of the dissenting clergy, of every denomination, many of them persons of the highest character for piety and intelligence, see nothing contrary to Protestant principle in the constitution of the Board, or the system of education which it is to carry into operation,—this cannot but produce a strong



effect upon the Protestants of Ireland. The chief opponents of the Board, after the high Tories of Ireland, are the Clergy of the Established Churches; and one at least of the reasons which they have uniformly given for this disapprobation of it, is, the unfavourable aspect which they imagine it bears upon Established Churches generally, and especially upon the influence and power of the Established Church of Ireland. The truth is, that Protestant prejudice against it is giving way; and it may be confidently expected, that, at no very great distance of time, most of the Protestants of Ireland will be found to cast away their apprehensions and distrust, and to lend their assistance to the perfecting of the system.

Let us now look for a moment at the system itself which has thus been produced by the mutual consultation of the hitherto hostile parties, and consider whether it ought to occasion serious alarm to Protestants. It provides that, in all schools receiving aid from the Board, a good education in the ordinary branches be given under the direction of local patrons or managers; they possessing the right of choosing the teachers; the Board, however, retaining the right to determine whether they will receive and remunerate the teacher who may be so chosen; and in cases in which they have advanced money to build school-houses, retaining the right to insist on the dismissal of any teacher who may prove to be incompetent, or who may violate the fundamental principles of the system. In this system of instruction, provision is made for introducing as



much of the Scripture as the Board may select for that purpose ; they being unanimous in regard to the passages selected, and also in regard to the form in which it is presented. This is an appeal to their desire for conciliation ; and it has not been made in vain. They have already agreed upon a series of lessons from the book of Genesis, and upon a translation of the Gospel by St. Luke ; which, from the well-known learning of some of the members of the Board, under whose review it must pass, we doubt not will be a faithful translation. Other portions of Scripture are to be added in succession, till the extracts shall include those passages of the Old and New Testament which are most intelligible to children.

But lest any unfairness in making these selections should be suspected, or lest portions of Scripture should be omitted which either Protestants or Roman Catholics might wish to have inserted, the clergy of any Church, or the local governors of the schools, have a right to require that certain days of the week, or hours of the day, be set apart for reading the Bible, or for any other religious exercise in which the clergyman himself of any denomination may preside, or appoint others to preside in his stead.

But what security is there that these rules of the system will be attended to ? If Roman Catholic priests get schools entirely under their own management, is it to be supposed that they will attend to these regulations ? The answer is, that there never can be any school exclusively under the care of the priest, except in consequence of a total want of Protestants in his parish, or their refusal to unite



with him in the application. In all cases it must be put in the power both of Roman Catholics and Protestants to sign applications for schools ; and by signing such applications they acquire a right to examine the schools, and see that the rules of the system are observed. If, therefore, Protestants leave the sole management of the schools in the hands of the priests, they have themselves to blame.

But it has been strongly pleaded that the exclusion of the Bible during school-hours is contrary to Protestant principle ; and that Protestants are precluded from signing applications by this exclusion. Is it then to be understood that it is one of the fundamental principles of the Protestant faith that the entire Bible shall be read in all day schools in which Protestant children are educated ? We apprehend that this is a principle upon which not many of the objectors themselves have been educated.

We have before us reports of the National Society for promoting the education of the poor in the principles of the Established Church of England ; a Society patronized by the prelates of the Establishment, in which surely it may be expected that every fundamental principle of the Protestant faith would be carefully guarded. Yet we can find there no stipulation for the reading of the Scriptures in the schools in connexion with it. The only stipulation for religious instruction in the schools that must be agreed to on making application for admission to the privileges of the Society is, that “ the children are instructed in the Liturgy and Catechism of the Established Church ;” and that, “ no religious tracts shall be used in the school but such as are contained in



the catalogue of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge." On the receipt of the application containing an acquiescence in these rules, and in no other way connected with religious instruction in the schools, it is announced, "schools may be admitted into union with the Society, and become entitled to such advantages as it is the practice of the Society to afford." On these principles, we are told in the Report for 1832, that 248,700 children are educated. So far, then, as persons who are connected with this Society, or who approve of it, are concerned, the objection to the present National System in Ireland is got up merely for the occasion.

It is, without doubt, a Protestant, because it is a Bible principle, that children should be early instructed in the doctrines and precepts of Scripture, and that they should be early made acquainted with the sacred volume itself. But the duty of communicating to children religious instruction, through the medium of the Bible, is not the question at issue between the friends and the opponents of the Government system. The question at issue is the propriety of reading the Scriptures, *during the ordinary school hours*, under the direction of the teacher, and that, consequently, *not as a religious, but as a common school exercise*. Now, it seems, at least, to admit of very serious doubt, whether the Scriptures ought ever to be read but as a religious exercise; and whether, therefore, teachers introduced to this office, under every variety of influence, should be recognized as fit persons to preside over that exercise with their pupils. If any of the parents of the children choose to recognize any of the school-masters as fit



teachers of religion, and wish to employ them to read the Scriptures with their children, liberty is secured to them to do so at any convenient hour that will not interfere with the ordinary school business : but the system leaves the religious instruction of children (where God originally placed it) with their parents or guardians ; and neither presents its teachers to the public, as teachers of religion, nor regards the reading of the Scriptures in any other light than a religious exercise. To accustom children to read the Scripture, unconnected with any feelings of reverence or devotion, is more likely to make them infidels than Christians. The religious feeling that still exists, to a considerable extent, in Scotland, is scarcely, if at all, to be attributed to the reading of the Bible as a common class-book in its parish schools, but to the devout and reverential use of the Bible in its families and churches, and to the labours of its many zealous and faithful ministers. One such scene as that described in “The Cotter’s Saturday Night,” does more, we are persuaded, for the religion of Scotland, than all the Testament and Bible classes, in parish schools, with which we have ever been acquainted. An education founded on the Holy Scriptures, and the reading of the Bible or Testament in a common school class, are things so totally different, that the former may exist in all its efficiency, where the latter never was thought of ; and the latter may be enforced with the utmost regularity, where no trace of the former is discernible.

But let it be granted that the principles of the Protestant faith require that the whole Bible be introduced into week-day schools, still the duty of



Protestants, with respect to the system introduced into Ireland, obviously is to avail themselves of the privilege which is secured to them of having the Scriptures read by such children as they find ready, with the permission of their parents, to read them. If the Scriptures, in the authorized version, be not read in every school within the reach of any Protestant minister, or other Protestant deputed by him, and in which there are children willing to read them, the fault lies with him, and not with the Government or the Board. But it appears that the more intolerant Protestants will not take the trouble of introducing the Scriptures into schools in their vicinity, unless they have the direction of Government to that effect. It is a somewhat singular revolution in sentiment, that the Presbyterians of the North of Ireland, not contented with free permission to have the Bible read in schools supported by Government, will not condescend to interfere for the introduction of the Bible into these schools, unless they obtain the direct authority of the Government. The Roman Catholics and Presbyterians, in consequence of having exchanged relative political stations, seem to have been led also to exchange principles on this point. In the olden times, Presbyterians were wont to protest against the interference of Government in any matter connected with religion, while Roman Catholics were accustomed to uphold and enforce the right of Governments to exercise control in such matters. Now, Presbyterian ministers, we find, refuse to cooperate in the schools, because the Government will not say that the Scriptures *must* be read in them; while Roman Catholics would



probably refuse to read the Scriptures if Government did command them, even if they were not otherwise disinclined to it.

The outcry that has been made about depriving the Protestants of the Bible, is as perverse an abuse of language as we have ever heard of. The Board has no authority to interfere in the management of any school. It has not adopted any means for bringing schools into connexion with it beyond publishing the terms on which it is authorized to assist schools. It therefore leaves the schools under the direction of Presbyterians precisely where it found them. Even if the conductors of schools choose of their own accord to apply to the Board, so far from preventing them from introducing the Bible into schools, it secures to them the liberty of doing so among their own children, or any others who may unite with them in reading it. We learn that the avowed ground of opposition is, that the reading of the Bible must not be in school hours; that is, not in hours devoted to other pursuits, nor at times when the children of parents who disapprove of their being present during the reading of the Protestant version of the Scriptures, must either be present, or forfeit some portion of the ordinary education of the schools. But they may have hours set apart for reading the Scriptures every day if they choose. For example, they may have their schools open from nine till ten every morning, or from two till three, that is, the first or last of the school hours, for that exercise, and invite all children to attend who choose, and they may call these hours school hours if they please; and the whole amount of the restriction is, that



children are to be admitted to the common education of the school, whose parents may not permit them to attend at the hour for reading the Scripture.

The cooperation of Protestants in this system is not to be under-valued ; although it may spread widely through the island without their assistance, it never can attain to that usefulness of which it is capable, if enlightened and benevolent Protestants keep aloof from it. From the nature of the objections which we have seen brought against it, Protestants seem to imagine that if they take part in the conducting of any school under it, they adopt the system as the best system that could be devised ; many of them are therefore discontented with it ; because it does not recognize Protestant principles to their full extent ; especially in regard to an explicit recognition of the use of the Protestant version of Scripture in the education of youth. But in this they manifestly over-state their responsibility. Individuals do not make themselves responsible for the wisdom of the system, by endeavouring to make use of it, and to turn it to good account. Even the members of the Board are not responsible to that extent. The system is not theirs ; it is presented to them by Government, and all that is required of them is to assist, so far as they can, without violating their principles, in rendering it useful. It would be quite consistent in Protestants to say, We do not altogether approve of the system ; we think some parts of it might be much improved ; we should have much wished that it had recognized the code of Revelation, rejecting all apocryphal additions, and also that it had recognized the authorized Protestant



version of the Scriptures ; but as the system opens to us opportunities of beneficially influencing the education of children of Ireland generally, and leaves us at liberty to have our own children instructed in our own Scriptures and catechisms, and as it is presented to us by the government of the country, we shall make trial of it, and endeavour to turn it to as good account as we can ; and if we find after a fair trial that no use can be made of it, we shall say so, and abandon it.

We are persuaded that nothing would tend so powerfully to heal the wounds of Ireland, as the adoption by Protestants generally of the principles on which the Protestant members of the Board have acted ; uniting with the Roman Catholic clergy in the management of their schools, and trying how far they can proceed with them in the religious education of youth, without compromise of principle.

The sentiment expressed by some zealous Protestants, that they ought not to enter into any consultation with Roman Catholics on subjects connected with religion, because they differ from them in essentials, seems to have no countenance in Scripture. The rule adopted by the Apostles seems rather to have been to make common cause with every one, so far as they could without a direct violation of the law of God, or a direct recognition of falsehood. From the moment that Christianity was announced, they were at variance with the Synagogue which rejected Christianity, in essentials ; yet they always recognized the worship of the Synagogue : nay, the Apostle Paul made common cause, as far as he could, with the heathen, declaring



himself to be a worshipper with them of the same God, although a God whom they *ignorantly* worshipped. In this charitable spirit the Church of England, and most other Protestant churches, recognize Roman Catholic baptism and ordination: and surely if it be lawful to make common cause with them in such eminently sacred matters, it is much more lawful to obey the invitation of Government, by consulting with them respecting the education of children, on the express stipulation of not being required to do or countenance any thing contrary to Protestant principles, but with full liberty to endeavour to persuade them to receive the whole truth.

Let Protestants cease from bitterness, and contempt, and hostility. Believing, as they profess to do, that Roman Catholics labour under a spiritual malady, let them urge upon them, with the tender and affectionate solicitude with which a judicious physician endeavours to prevail upon his patients to lay aside prejudices against his prescriptions, and the reception of those medicines which alone can cure them. To hate and revile them is as absurd as to hate and revile persons labouring under mortal disease. The more deadly the disease, the more does the patient require sympathy and tender treatment. Let them lay aside every shred and fragment of that compulsory system which the experience of more than two hundred years has proved to be productive of nothing but mischief, especially to their own character and institutions. Let them rest their cause solely on the power of the truth introduced with tenderness and skill, as Roman Catholics may be able to bear it—in this also imitating the beautiful deportment of Him



whom they call Lord and Master, who never hurried forward the people to whom he communicated his doctrine, more rapidly than they were able to bear. Let them adopt this mode of commending their religion, and we might soon expect to see a better day dawn on Ireland—a day of union and of peace, and of rapid advancement in all that renders a nation truly happy and truly great.



















